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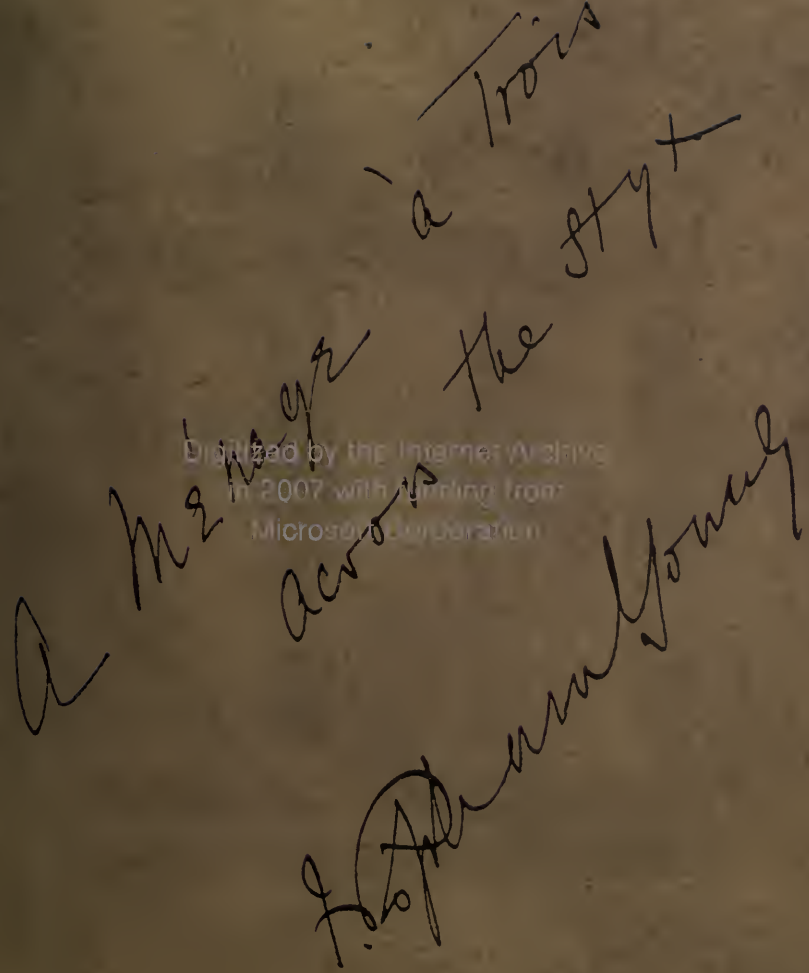

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A MÉNAGE À TROIS ACROSS THE STYX

AND OTHER

ADVENTURES IN VERSE

by

LT. COL. SIR FRANK POPHAM YOUNG
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A. M. ROBERTSON
SAN FRANCISCO

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TO THE LADY

WHO HAS PLACED HER HAND IN MINE
COME WEAL OR WOE
THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS DEDICATE

F. P. Y.

"KISMET"

HAT which is built by mortal hands
Time lays to waste,
But 'tis not so with those mysterious commands,
Which on man's forehead traced,
Link life with life by interwoven strands
Of Destiny. These cannot be effaced.

"IN THE MIST"

JOVE has thundered, Venus beckoned,
Thor and Odin held their sway;
(*See the light upon the mountain*
And the ripple on the sea!)
Brahma counselled, Shiva threatened;
Christ has died.
(*Hear the rustle on the mountain*
And the murmur of the sea!)

Sternly preached Mahommed;
Gently smiling, practised Buddha. Yet alway
Human steps have wandered,
Human hearts have cried
"What is Truth? But lift the curtain,
Making Love more pure, and Faith more certain."
(*The light has died upon the mountain—*
Mists enshroud the sea).

CALIFORNIA OR CATHAY

I RESTED in the Shalimar where, tier on tier,
The jewelled garden nestles 'neath th' eternal hills,
And broods above the sleeping surface of the lake.
The great "chenar" trees whispered "It was here
Jehangir held his court," and all the little rills
Told of a storied Past. I pondered only half awake;

Pictured the smooth and scheming courtiers, silken clad,
When Islam with a fierce, intense, and vivid sweep
Led, dominated, ruled, and then declined.
By sloth and luxury beguiled, and power-mad,
Akbar's great Empire-fortress tottered till its keep,
Sapped by fanatic hate, was slowly undermined.

And then the jangled music of soft camel bells
Announced a "Kafila" beyond the carven gate.
Austere and supercilious, gaunt, reluctant, slow,
From Samarkand, Bokhara—weaving magic spells—
These central Asian genii discharged their freight,
Into the living present, stark Romance of long ago.

I watched the bearded, hawk-nosed trader from afar,
Engirt with pistols, hung about with keen edged knives,
And judged his treasure to be something worth,
Perchance
He carried priceless jewels—some great, shining star
Of Asia! Or perchance this care betokened wives
Suspect of light and loose—and dangerous—dalliance.

NOTE: Kafila—a train of camels.

He made ablutions. Then with fervent, supple grace
Salaamed to Allah, faced the setting sun in prayer.
A half raised "burka," which had draped the form
Of one who, patient, sat behind, revealed a face
Which well might turn an Emperor from the fretting
care
Of march and countermarch, of combat, siege, and
storm.

Long curving lashes swept the olive tinted cheek
Stained with a tea-rose flush. Then slowly
dropped the veil.
The little figure softly lit upon the ground,
To outward seeming humble, acquiescent, meek,
Followed the age old path of servitude behind the
male,
Rebel at heart—her eyes had told it—gagged and
bound.

Long years have passed, and more than half the
circled world
Divides me from that terraced garden of delight.
Softened by night the rough Pacific hills enfold.
On the calm bosom of the bay the sails are furled.
The water plashes and low voices of the night
Bring back to me that scene, the tale that half was
told.

The wizardry of art has wrought with loving skill,
Has caught the spirit of the Orient; and here
Curved arches, cunning lines of building, terraced
slopes,
The sense of quiet water, and the brooding hill,
The richly perfumed air—all waft me to Kashmir,
And tell a thousand tales of bygone fears and hopes.

Once more I see that stealing glance with eyes abrim,
The little henna-tinted feet, the blush, the blanch
of fear,
As gleaming in the folds of his silk "kamarband"
Sharp steel forbade all speech with any man but him,
(Owner of lips unsmiling, Lord of a tremulous tear)
Who brought his wares to India from distant
Samarkand.

Written in the garden of the Samarkand Hotel,
Santa Barbara, Calif., February 28, 1921.

VOX FEMINAE VOX DEI

INSCRIBED TO ———.

CARELESSLY I trod and recked not that my feet
Oft injured little peeping things of life.
The frond unfolding, and the shyly sweet
Florescence of green leaf and yellow bud.
Born in a world of strife,
Small things essayed their wings,
Or crept, across my path.
Those little animate things
I crushed unheeding. Careless hands destroyed them.
Careless footsteps spilled their innocent blood.
The righteous wrath
Of God made me more blind.
The timid questionings of some untutored mind,
The gropings of a human soul,
The silent plea for sympathy—all these sacred claims
I passed unheeding. Like the sightless mole
I burrowed, thinking all the while that selfish aims
Carried me upwards. I had hurt and bruised
Frail things and tender, newly born.
For worse than open scorn
Is chill indifference. I had thus abused
The trust imposed in me, but gaily went
Along the open road, blind to the narrow trails
Which lead through brambles to the dazzling height.
I had been sent
To do God's work. The man who fails
Not in his weakness, but because the light
Is turned from in a selfish pride
Had better died
Before, with calloused soul, he learns

To hold that he is justified
When he has failed to glimpse the Love,
All else above,
For which the whole of Nature aching ever yearns.

* * * * * *

And so, in truth, with eyes I thought uplifted,
My steps were leading to a dark and ice-cold Hell.
I had believed I marched and conquered. I had
merely drifted.
Then God compassioned with me; and I met,
And meeting loved—Estelle!

K 1. AND K 2.

The fourth highest mountain peak in the world has been named by cartographers "K. 2."

CHALLENGING the giant Everest
For world supremacy, it soars
Lifting its snow clad crest
Near thirty thousand feet into the azure
of an Eastern sky,
Stands sentinel above the rugged tableland of far
Thibet,
Whilst from its molten sides it pours
Great streams of water into the teeming plains
Where myriad voices ever raise the ceaseless cry
"Assuage our thirst, enrich our fields, so we forget
The pangs of hunger and the pains
Of drought." Through the long years
This mighty monarch of the Himalayan range
Skyward rears
The glittering lancepoint of its ice bound peak.
Its snow draped sides untrod,
Nor chance, nor change
Affect its solemn, silent intercourse with God.
Remote, mist-shrouded, Science had, perforce,
to seek
Amidst the tumbled mass of chasm and cliff,
ravine and towering mountain top
Its jealous guarded secret. Located after many years,
Measured and charted, there appears
The stately record of this vast outcrop
Of rock primaeval. No grandiloquence
Of nomenclature marks its consequence.

K. 2 is all the name
By which it stands identified
This far off mountain, which so long defied
The curious interest of men. Its fame
E'en now denied.

* * * * * *

July the twenty-second. Here I sit
Thinking of just a little bit
Of femininity. A woman child
By whose kind eyes beguiled
The rusting decades slip away,
And Youth sings sweetly "Life is work *and* play."
Vision slips backwards, inwards; and I muse—
If between dominating forces one could choose
That which should lead and guide
Would one abide
By all that mountain seems to typify—
(Quest, domination, struggle; add and multiply)—
In the harsh battle of ambitious aims
Which made one long to climb and conquer?
    What's the use
Of scaling heights if, left behind,
In the cold effort to improve one's mind
The tender claims
Of laughing lips
Of little, rosy, clinging finger tips
Are passed and there remains,
For all one's pains,
A husk without a core, a sapless rind?

This other K
Holds a more potent sceptre, has a wider sway.
And so I lay
These verses at her feet
On this her natal day.
K. 2, Go too!
I have no wreath for you.
This is K. 1. Smile with those bright eyes, Sweet!
Will you not kiss me, K?

To Kathleen (Kay)
On her sixteenth birthday.

INTERCESSIONAL

TO BESSIE McJ. BARRET

A LADY FROM 'OLE KAINTUCK', IN WHOM THE WRITER HAS BEEN PRIVILEGED TO DISCERN THOSE CHIVALROUS QUALITIES WITH WHICH HE HAS ENDOWED MOSES HIGGINS, THESE VERSES ARE INSCRIBED

F. P. Y

INTERCESSIONAL

IN the little room, above the barn, in ole Kaintuck
One Moses Higgins breathed his last. He'd "followed 'osses
Most 'is life." These new machines had made things hard,
But that stout heart had never lost its pluck.
If old Mo' played a card
And lost, you'ld never hear a whine about his losses.
I'ld have you know that this old Mo',
Above whose lonely grave wild grasses blow,
Deserved as much that greatest epitaph,
"A gentil, parfait knight,"
As any doughty, mediaeval champion of the fight.
His sword a reaping hook,
His spear a staff,
Nature his Book,
He played the game, ploughed a straight furrow, never lied,
Lived cleanly, loved devoutly, laid him down—and died.

The blue eyes glazed, and Moses Higgins looked upon a screen.
"The Moses Higgins record!" called a voice.
A shining figure—Mo' saw him fold his wings—
Announced the choice.
I guess it's me they mean,
Thought Moses. "That's the Arch-Director, Gabriel. 'Hello, Gabe'," he said.

"You've got me goin' round in rings."
"Hold on!" said Gabriel. "We've got to size you
up a bit
To see if you pass fit.
You know you're dead."
"I guess," said Moses, "they're aint much to show.
Jus' me behind the 'osses. It's a pretty team.
The grey mare's savin' her off fore.
There's Lizzie at the gate. She oughter know
That I'm out lookin' for her. It do seem
As if she reckerlected I was kinder sore
The time she beat it off to town
With that young drummer chap who called me
clown.
But, bless yer, Liz, I've gotten over that this long
ago.
You creep in here, and lie all cuddled like yer
useter—so."

"What's this yer showin', Gabe? Why that aint
me!
I guess that's Romeyo, or that Hamlick guy,
Who stuck that fat chap, hid behind the curtain,
with his sword.
Gosh! How that made me larf! I'm blessed if I
can't see
Doug Fairbanks doin' stunts—and that blue eye
I'ld know a mile off—Mary Pick—My word!
You don't say that them is me and Liz
Cuttin' around, and doin' all that funny biz!"

"Why, yes, I'll say that when those actor chaps
Was showin' how you'ld gotta play the game,
And keep yer pecker up, and peg away, and tell
the truth
And trust yer girl,
I useter feel
That I'd no cause to squeal
Because I didn't seem to make no headway. I
thought p'raps
It weren't no shame,
Me bein' what that drummer called uncouth
(Yokel was right enough, but when he named me
churl
That riz me, and I knocked his silly tooth
Into his windpipe)—I thought it weren't no shame
To make pretence that I was jus' the same
As them bright fellers. I useter step along
(Me, ole Mo'—some Romeyo!)
Behind the 'osses with a kind o' song
Singin' inside me. What's that Gabe?
You've passed me? Reckon you're some babe.
I go behind the curtain 'long o' Liz?
And take the grey mare too? I'll say that is
Worth waitin' for. I'll tell ole Pete
That he must keep them actor chaps a seat,
For sure they helped a lot, and kep things clean
and sweet,
When life was kind o' dull and work a grind
In that ole Kaintuck shanty that I've left behind."

Written in connection with Actor's Benefit Fund Fete at Los Angeles

"A CUP OF COLD WATER"

THE Haberdasher's Assistant saluted the
clear dawn,
Scratching the while with unclean
finger nail
A festering surface on his thigh,
With a yellow fanged and offending yawn,
A bleary eye, and a dismal sigh,
Half snore, half wail.

* * * * * *

Through the green avenue of trees,
Along the shining beach,
They gave their willing horses rein,
And the look in his pleasant tired eyes was like that of
a war worn Moor who sees
In the desert a haven of rest, and a harvest af grain,
At last within his reach.

* * * * * *

The Haberdasher's Assistant coughed, lay still,
Caressed a pimple on his chin,
And slowly counted the coins he had pinched
By sly manoeuverings with ledger and with till.
Made play with rusty razor, essayed cold water,
shivered thereat and flinched.
And so with dragging steps set forth his
daily bread to win.

* * * * * *

The little wrinkles round his tired eyes
Creased into kindliness and mirth.
Hillside and moor, flood, field and tropic suns.
The silken salon, music, laughter, azure skies,
Tempest, harsh conflict, belching guns,
Had marred and made this man for such as he was worth.

* * * * * *

Through door ajar the Haberdasher's Assistant spied
A bowed and broken figure; (*Mary, pity women!*) Youth astray,
Hunger and misery enthroned where Love should reign!
And floundering in the squalid mire of his life, he lied,
Denied himself, regretted, cursed, denied himself again,
Found strength, gave comfort, shewed a better way.

* * * * * *

A veritable Knight he seemed.
"No doubt he'd lived his life."
(Those little bowed and broken figures by the way!)
The road stretched fair in front. They talked and dreamed.
(Thus is the balance. Some spend and others pay.)
Peace after battle. After Experience a wife.

* * * * * *

The sun, slow westering, lit the hills across the bay,
Made glorious the glittering tracery of the trees,
And cast a halo round her golden hair.
Aslant, down murky streets the dying day
Groped for an entry up a narrow stair,
But, fading, failed to find a form on bended knees.

* * * * * *

Is this the balance? In the cosmic veins
A red corpuscle found a tardy birth.
And aeons after with a surge as of rising tide, and of pent up flood,
The vivifying Force which rules by yielding, and by service reigns,
Multiplied and martialled the red corpuscles, attacked and routed, swept and cleansed the blood.

And thus did the Haberdasher's Assistant play a part in creating a new Heaven long after his rickety and calcareous bones had returned to the good Earth.

"NOBLESSE OBLIGE"

"NOBLESSE OBLIGE"

THE sceptre passes. In the "good old days"
When Gurth the swineherd waited at the postern gate
And hugged the chains which bound him, munched the proffered crust,
Nor questioned Fate,
A single golden phrase—
"Noblesse Oblige"—born in the cut and thrust
Of those fierce conflicts which ennobled and enslaved
Men with an equal birthright, helped to compensate
For all the hideous inequity which ruled—and rules —the world.
"*Dieu et mon droit*" the buccaneering Baron raved,
With pennons flying, banner of silk unfurled,
And robbed, and raped, and murdered with his chosen partner—God.
Some fed their appetites. Others hewed the wood
And drew the water, tilled the kindly soil,
Broken in spirit kissed the chastising rod,
Nor understood
That the keen blade and pointed lance
Were edged and sharpened by their honest toil.
The gallant bearing and the gay romance
Of those who reaped what these poor hinds had sown
Obscured the issue, and the circumstance
Of puling infants, cradled in mangers or in palaces,
Determined who should perish in the fetid hovel, who should occupy the gilded throne.
Thus human fallacies
Forged chains which link by link
Priests tempered, monarchs strengthened, lackeys and peasants embraced.

But one thought graced
Those darkened ages. One lone star shone clear
And helped the tossed and weather beaten craft to steer
—Though blindly—to a haven where men should rest awhile.
"Noblesse Oblige!" The Golden Rule applied
To those who held the rank and wealth men almost deified.
"Noblesse Oblige!" Surrender; sacrifice;
Excuse for ignorance;
The courteous smile
When weakness hurled the angry insult; tolerance
Of human frailties; pity for poverty. In this device
Emblazoned on the banners of the chosen few
A world distraught with hates and fears
Found hope, held faith, gained solace for bitter tears,
Courage in sorrow, measure of comfort, some small ruth for rue.

* * * * * *

The sceptre passes. Rank lingers on the stage
Superfluous. "Captains and Kings depart."
Science, not privilege, marks the accepted sage.
The brains of men, their industry, their art
Fashion the crowns worth wearing. Fearless eyes
Look into eyes as fearless. Throughout a continent
Stretching three thousand miles from sea to sea
No man so daft
As to deny his heritage
Of all the earth. Not one who deifies
Those ancient fetishes which have meant

So much to men who had not known the joy of
being free.
The crown of freedom presses on the brow
Of every citizen of America,
And here in the fair state of California
Where even now,
When half the world is hungered and athirst,
The horn is filled with plenty, and the presses burst
With all the lavish products of a golden soil,
That crown is studded with a thousand costly gems.
Enthroned and sceptred by their enterprise and toil
Winged are their feet to lead men forward.
Myrrh and frankincense
Are proffered by proud sovereigns of distant realms,
Piteous, entreating hands would touch the hems
Of garments worn by those whose eyes have seen
the light
Denied to them; of men who can dispense
Their favours regally; whose hands are on the helms
Of all the little barques which set their timid sails
To catch the winds of Freedom; of men who've
fought and won—in part—the fight.

* * * * * *

But what of all that Privilege entails?
"Noblesse Oblige." How far does that sweet phrase
Govern men's conduct in these later days
Of clash and clanguor and of storm and stress?
These modern monarchs go their several ways
And ask, no favours, plead for no largesse.
They've learned to take what's theirs, to hold
their own.

But what of giving? On the bare Caucasian slopes,
Where the blue Danube rolls, on barren Russian plains,
On Don, on Dneiper, Vistula; on Rhine and Rhone,
Amidst the tumbled Balkans—everywhere the hopes
Of famished men, of lonely women, helpless orphans, rest upon the generosity of those whose gains
Have not been wasted in the cruel furnace of the war.
And not in vain the quest!
America has proved herself as great in giving as in garnering wealth.
But money does not heal the scar
Which sears the soul of men. What of the kindly thought,
The knightly courtesy, humility in pride—
Gifts of the spirit which can not be bought?
There is no health
In arrogance, or in the strength which boasts,
And would deride
The claims of those who cannot martial hosts
To force them. "Noblesse Oblige." From that old world
In which men groped towards the light,
And, groping, bound themselves with iron chains
Of Privilege, and Prejudice, and Fantasies, and Forms,
Has passed the sceptre. No longer, scented, curled,
Pampered, misled by intrigue, flattered by parasite,
Does Royalty dictate the issue. Thews and brains
Bred in the crowded cities, nurtured in the fertile plains
Of free America can alone decide

Whether that civilization shall abide
Which trembles in the balance. It is your pride
That 'neath the stars and stripes, no crest, no
coat of arms, no old device
Of mud-stained chivalry
Can link your purpose with a tortured past.
The stripes for union, and the stars for liberty!
Let that suffice!
That "he alone must travel who would travel fast"
Voices that other thought your stripes deny.
The stripes for union! Would you then confine
That sense of union? Give the lie
To half your emblem? Do the stars reflect
God's light upon a single continent
Of this small globe, which, swinging in the firmament,
Carries the destiny of man.
Do you reject
The wider plan,
Which tells you that the call,
Resounding on your platforms, echoed in your press,
applauded even in your Council Hall,
"First comes America," can never satisfy
The souls of those who wield the sceptre? Is it not
better than that golden phrase
Which helped the weaker, made more strong the
stronger, in those "good old—bad old—days"
—"Noblesse Oblige"—be written on the flag which
leads the van?
So shall America not permit to die
Her own ideal—The Real Brotherhood of Man.

CREEDS, CONSTELLATIONS, AND CREEPING THINGS

THE sense of Oneness! If that only were achieved,
And human brains conceived
That greater thought which links
Mankind, the sap which thrills with life
The larkspur, poisonous red berry, and the little peeping frond,
Born with a tender breath of spring into a world of strife,
The fleeting moment and the Great Beyond,
The furtive weasel as it homeward slinks
Obscene with cruel bloodstains and yet sanctified
In that she lives, as she had gladly died,
To feed two cheeping, chattering little balls of fur,
Pressing with soft, pink, clawless pads her swollen teats,
Which constitute the Universe to her!
Rapine, surrender, sacrifice, low greed, and lofty feats
Of knightly chivalry, all inextricably bound and tied
Into the very fabric of the lives
Of men and mice and metals, hunter and hunted, prelates and butchers, doves, cormorants, cretaceans, prostitutes, and wives!
If man but understood!
The plains of France bear witness. Seamed and scarred
The barren fields are sown with skulls and bones
To ripen into hate twixt humans yet unborn:
The erstwhile fruitful orchard and the peaceful wood
All charred:

Sweet homesteads ravished, women dishonoured,
little ones forlorn.
Is there no gain to balance? Nothing which atones?
"A greater love no man can have than this."
Through the long ages how those words resound!
Stirred by a wave of generous, patriotic thought,
(Come death! Come sickness, or the crippling
wound!)
They held themselves as naught,
Embraced the steel, welcomed the shattering roar
of cannon, and the bullet's hiss,
If England lived—If France escaped her doom—
If the lost provinces of Italy could be redeemed—
If young America could show the world
That the free banner which she had unfurled
Could not be stained by lust of conquest. Ebb
and flow
Mark all the processes of Nature. Dying embers
nurse the glow
From which again shall leap the sacred flame.
It has even seemed
That the filth-crusted, dust-encumbered room
Of human habitation
Has been garnished, cleansed and swept,
Whilst strong men writhed in agony and women wept,
For the greater delectation
Of seven times seven devils who have entered in.
Revise your phrases! Recognize that sin
Is clear insanity:
That egotistic faith to which you pin
Your hopes of gaining something which you've
missed

A sheer inanity!
"*Sic vos non vobis.*" When the stern crusader kissed
The cross which made a handle to the blade
He fain would crimson with the blood of men
Born in a distant land,
He failed to understand
That he blasphemed his own ideal.
The tide creeps higher, despite the frequent retrocession,
Now as then.
For not less real
Has been the blundering ineptitude which has led
Teuton and Gaul, Celt, Slav, and many a mingled breed
Welded in selfless loyalty to a mere geographical expression
To suffer jubilantly without heed
To personal advantage. Yet the red blood they shed
On Moloch's altar is accepted as a sacrifice
In that it marks a dawning sense
Of the extension of the sphere of influence
Of that great Concept which shall one day kill
The creeds which help to float the swimmer and then with strangling hold
Engulf him in a sea of self. To heal the essential ill
It shall not suffice
That Mongol and Aryan would as lief
Hamper or hurt each other as a thief
Would steal the wage that he himself has earned.
Far more bold
Must be man's grasp of that Infinity,
So faint discerned—

The infinitely small and infinitely great,
The mite, the microbe, men, Martians, and the
Milky Way,
Larva of dead volcanoes, laughing children, wondrous
webs of spiders, stinging nettles, fragrant
flowers in May,
Love-linked, though seemingly distraught with hate,
Inseparate, Inviolate—
The One in All, and All in one, which is Divinity!

A MÉNAGE À TROIS ACROSS THE STYX

A MÉNAGE À TROIS ACROSS THE STYX

"IT'S a dashed nuisance that we've lost our grips.
That weird old fellow at the helm's to blame.
I'm blowed
If I'll bestow upon these grinning boatmen any tips.
I like this place. We'll breakfast here. The air was chill
Crossing that river. Strange I cannot recollect the name.
I wish I'd rowed
To keep me warm.
Why do you kiddies sit so glum and still?
What does it matter where we've landed? It's the same
So long as we're together. Sweetheart, lend your lips!
Encircle me with your soft arm!
That's better. Feel myself again.
And now to breakfast. I vote we go and sit
In the vine-trellised arbour yonder. P'raps we'll get a drink.
It doesn't look as if this place
Was ruled by that damned prohibition. Shine or rain
We've stuck together since Claire made a hit
With me, and I began to think
In terms of real soul freedom, and this little Grace,
Wife of my springtime, recognized the truth
That man is polygamic—kept her hand in mine—

Never reproached because we found that on a
certain plane
We met no longer; whether it was Youth
That sprouted fresh within me—or the brute.
I'm not abusing any part of God's creation.
They are just as fine
As we are—these frank, healthy, sane,
Erotic, questing, hunting, fighting, lusting beasts.
Well, anyway, Grace understood and played the
game,
And here we are—the three of us! Doesn't
she look cute
In that frilled nighty? Give me your lips, Claire!
It's blamed queer
That after all our feasts
Of Love and Reason, when we talked, and danced,
and sang,
Touched life at every point,
And never gave a hang
For damned conventions, we should be sitting here
In this rum joint,
And dressed like this, as if we three had had a call
At midnight which we could not shirk or stay.

* * * * * * *

"So that's it, is it? You two knew that Life
Held us no longer—that the Moving Picture Play
Is over for the three of us? Well, after all
It had to come some day.
Styx or Spoon River! Loose me for a moment,
Claire.
I want that little Grace,
My wife,

Back in my arms. Guess we've got to face
This thing together. You, too, Claire! I
didn't mean
To hurt you, sweetheart. You and I
Have got to try
To straighten this thing out—be fair and square
To this dear child on whose calm strength
we've learned to lean.
How did we die?

* * * * * *

"I remember now, Claire. You had sung
And thrilled me with the passion of your
splendid voice.
It seemed that liquid fire coursed my veins. I
had no choice.
A star, low hung,
Lit that sweet path which led
To rapture. Grace had slipped away,
To sleep or pray.
You had shed
Upon me all the generous, poignant beauty of
your love,
Showered upon me all the glorious wealth
Of that wild, wayward heart, which made your eyes
Rubies for me, your breasts great chalices of wine,
Gave to your voice the soft caressing murmur of
of the mating dove,
And made your hair a mesh which held me by a
thousand strands of gold.
And then with stealth
Came footsteps to surprise,
Came Greed and Violence to snatch poor gauds
of mine.

And when I started to resist I felt the clinging
hold
Of your soft arms. One shot in panic killed us both.
Terror had made that poor, stealing coward bold.
And Grace here—she could not have been far
off, Claire—
Nothing loth.....
(*Not far off! By God! That makes one think.*
Oh, yes! She'd acquiesced. But was it fair?)
Took that to drink
Which brought her little body to the brink
Of the dark river which we've crossed.
So it's all over! All is won or lost.
We three have got to face the music—count
the cost!
The harvest ripens. Well, t'was I that sowed
the seed!
Hi! Waiter! Where's that queer old Ganymede?"

* * * * * *

"Gen'man with two ladies, Sir! Wants to pay the
bill.
Seems that 'e's 'ad 'is fill
And doesn't know the rules of this establishment.
'Can't pay for wot I've 'ad?' 'e says.
' 'Oo runs this show? Is this a bloomin' maze?
I've 'eard,' 'e says, 'of 'umans being' sent
Along the broad and easy path plumb down to Hell,
Or up the straight and narrer—jus' two ways.
But this would craze
A bleedin' Archimandrite to be told'
(You'll pardon me, Sir, if I'm overbold.
I'm usin' jus' the langwidge w'ich 'e used)

'That wot a fella's bought 'as not bin sold,
And that the one 'oo pays
Is not the chap wot's fed the biggest appetite.
I'd rather be excused
From entering any of the many mansions in this
'ouse'
(His actual words, Sir, were that 'e'd be damned)
'If I can't settle this account.
I'll do wot's right.
I've never subterfuged, or lied, or shammed,
And I'll pay up, wotever the amount.'
In fact 'e claimed to be the one and only mouse
As ate the cheese.
Judg'n, 'owever, that Yer Honor's ruling in this
case
Seems to be likely to affect the 'uman race
Considerable, since they've chucked the good old
wheeze
'Bout marriage bein' made in 'Eaven,
I've brought the crowd along.
I guess the little 'un supplies the leaven
To sweeten the 'ole lump,
Altho' she aint carollin' no sweet song.
There's suthin' about 'er seems to brighten
this old dump.
Well! That's your job, Sir. 'Scuse me now!
So long!"

* * * * * *

"I see you misconstrue the purpose of this Court.
I'll not enter now
Into those super-subtleties to which your minds
are not attuned.

This is no anteroom to a kind of psychic health
resort,
Such as your quacks who flourish down below
Construct to fit their predilections. You have
mooned
About your souls, and sought to justify
A living lie
By reference to Truths you've really failed to
grasp,
Altho' you've glimpsed them. Now you three
Before me, in brief respite, stand at the last gasp
Of those detached, encircling, envelopes of flesh
(*Drops, rivulets, then rivers, then the open sea!*)
Which for a space have circumscribed
Those fragments of the essential, Universal stuff
Short loaned to you. Each held within, and peering
through, a mesh
Has given to each, and has from each imbibed,
And yet in futile, human arrogance has maintained
The personal, egoistic standpoint. You believe
That it is not enough
That the whole Universe of circling orbs
Should swing in ordered, rhythmic unison; that each
scrap
Of interlocking, interchanging, interacting dust,
Each particle a Cosmos which has waxed and waned,
(*Grass, fibre, shuttle, warp and woof, and, lo!
the Final Weave!*)
Should form a part of that Infinity of Mind
Which grasps, reflects, ordains, reacts, absorbs
All processes—is Life, is Love, is Hope,
the very Sap
And Substance—Hunger, Thirst, Soft Pity, Rabid
Lust

Sex, Music, Dissolution, Reconstruction, Sun and Wind,
Heat, Vapour, Waves, Vibrations, Impulse, Act,
Art, Mechanism, Ether, Poetry, Concept, Fact,
Ape, Vegetable, Man, Sloth, Flea, and Cataract.
All this is not enough, but you must hold
Since we've endowed a certain fragment of our whole
With cerebration—matter in motion whirled around
So that the things you call volition, thought,
Follow on certain groupings—your mentalities enfold
A separate entity; that the human Soul
Amounts to something which, as though in honour bound,
We must perpetuate. It matters naught
That all the rotting refuse of the endless forms
In which you see life spring and life decay
Gainsay
Your theories. You cling
To that which is in truth a very little thing.
The lesson of the bees, of gin, depression, exaltation, calms and storms,
Of ions, coral, crawfish, Mamelukes and Kings,
Seed, sceptres, sickness, health, volcanoes, wedding rings.
Laws, revolutions, motherhood, receding tides, dead stars,
Unions of labour, churches, comradeship, fierce wars—
All these escape you, since you magnify
That little spark which animates
The brief association of dead leaf, dead fly,
Mist of the mountain, and the ocean slime,

(*Which, conscious of itself,*
Desires and copulates, breeds, barters, boasts, and hates)
Into a rounded whole. But neither Space nor Time
Limit the vision of that conscious Universe
In which you claim
That each fortuitous concatenation of our element,
Which is to Nature as the sound of insects' hum or as the scent
Of flowers, shall rest forever on its little shelf
(*Marcus Aurelius, Robert Browning, Caliban, Wong Sin, Yourself*)
Beatified, or blighted by some cruel, vengeful, undiscerning curse.
You miss our aim.
Soft dalliance with houris, blissful adoration, human intercourse
With the few atoms you've contacted with before,
Thrills without satiety,
A chain of transmigration with each link,
Detached in individual knowledge from the one behind—
A weird variety
Of futile aspirations centred round the core
Of finite consciousness which you choose to think
To be the very Source
Of Something sempiternal. You must clear the mind
Of all such aberrations. Hate, Love, Fear, Remorse
Abide. No sparrow falls and leaves the Universe unchanged.
Your acts have helped or hurt
To all time.

I have ranged
Beyond your comprehension. Hold to this.
Clean dirt,
(*The sweat of agonized, effete endeavour*
Or fierce, forbidden, lusting, generous, sympathetic kiss),
Noisome slime,
(*Deliberate and hypocritical denial of the truth*)
May clog and jam our mechanism, both alike.
The one is swept away,
Dust dancing in the sun's clear ray.
The other, in that it retards th' appointed end,
Endures forever,
Confounds confusion, wrecks a myriad lives,
Is cancerous in the heart of that which men call God.
There is no ruth
For meanness, self deception, Pharisaic lies.
The man who strives
And fails, has helped to clear the issue. Made
The anti-toxin. The green sod
Which lightly rests where he was laid
Can deal with all that emanates. The little cries
Of peewits marks the passing of that soul,
Merged in the Infinite; enwrapt; oblivious; fragment of the Conscious Whole.

* * * * * *

"I see friend Richard yawns portentously. Perhaps he thinks
That all the troubles which afflict the tortured world
—It always has been tortured; ever on the brinks
Of endless crises—these are due

To the loquacity he has observed in Me,
Indicative of that dread thing, senile decay.
Instead of those harsh thunderbolts we hurled
To drive our blithering sheep back into the fold,
A stream of endless talk! Dick, I think that you
Are justified. I said I would not deal in super-
subtleties.
But I see
I've got you all balled up when I have only told
The half of half of the tenth part of all that I
might say.
So to get back to earth! It has dawned on you
That if my teaching holds, it matters naught
To that dead self of yours if you have wrought
Evil or good. Rewards, damnation, rapture, rue,
All meaningless! A truce to metaphysics! I will
merely hint
At that which some day will be understood
Even by humans. What if you are sick?
You long for health. Thought conquers. You
are well.
Mind is the mint.
Your little cosmos—revolving atoms; Sleep and
Awaking;
Procreation; Brain Work; Food;
Co-operation; Energy; Despair; Hope; Habit;
Flame and Wick—
Restores proportions, reckons values, skirts the
brink of Hell,
Emerges sane, and dances gladly down the path
of Time.
But when mind fails? Does not this mean
That all the myriad component parts lack unison,
have not the sense of rhyme,

Fail to react, to comprehend direction, are self-willed?
Now grant this comprehension! Does the new-born child
Yearn to destroy the gentle breasts which wean?
Does the lute strive to make a rasping discord?
Yet it happens so,
For lack of comprehension—*which is Conscience.*
Dick!
Those fabled tortures, burnings, keeping dead things quick
That they may suffer anguish, are as melting snow
To lips all cracked and parched, compared with that distress
Which shatters, rends, and tears each fibre of the Inner Consciousness
Of those who *know,*
Who've hurt, who've hindered, made insane, unclean,
The very thing they are—the All-Pervading, All-Embracing, Great Unseen.

* * * * * *

"It comes to this,
The lightest kiss,
The flicker of a half-born thought,
Repression, Inclination—all these count.
Each a microscopic fount
Flowing eternal. Crushed insects fertilize a tiny seed;
The desert blossoms. From that little weed
Follow the chain of consequence! A flower plucked;
A darting rattlesnake; Human ambitions shattered, brought to naught;

Hearts broken; children wailing—a whole world
awry.

* * * * * *

"And now, my friends, I've chucked
This highfalutin' talk. I'll have a try
To size the situation up with which we've got to deal.
In language suited to those mortal brains
Which shortly must be used again for making grass
or glow worms.
We've got to balance losses, count the gains,
Now that you three are dead.
In spite of all I've said
We go through all the forms
Of judgment. What is your appeal?
I'll do the pleading. There is nothing sacrosanct
About an institution planned by men and ratified
by priests,
Who incidentally may be thanked
For half the troubles Flesh is heir to. Marriage
feasts
Occasion frequent indigestion. We continually shift
Our standards. Many a dead Turk,
By honest work,
Has helped to give your little world a lift,
Whose amorous proclivities might have justified
—If we did things that way—
A course in higher mathematics for that cheerful
myth
The Recording Angel. Your point is Richard,
that you haven't lied
To your most intimate associate in the game of life,
Your wife.

All those intensely complex forces which must play
Upon the question—heredity, environment,
attributes
Of mind and body—you had better leave to me.
I'll extract the pith.
Men are brutes.
Mists of the mountain top are part and parcel
of the sea.
The sum and substance of it all is this.
—Clasp; handshake; soft caress; sweet, clinging,
biting kiss—
Who has been taking, who been giving, most?
Just when you are, just where you are, just who
you are,
You've got to play the game, in peace or war,
To help and not to hinder. The kindly crutch today
Will atrophy sound limbs unless it's thrown away
When all the host
Of tiny filaments of nerve and tissue tingle at the call
Of health restored.
Just who you are, just where you are, just when,
The world of men
Must gain or lose by you. The supremest test
Is giving and taking. One loved, and one abhorred
By the Great Purpose. That's the all in all!
Let go the rest!

* * * * * *

"One of you is rotten. That means a doom
I've only vaguely adumbrated. Grace's
pleading eyes
Tell the old tale. Vicarious sacrifice
Means nothing really. We have no room
For purely human sentiment. And yet

You'll miss the balance, finer than the thread
Of finest gossamer split in a billion strands,
If you fail to get
The inner meaning of the thing called Love.
We put that above
Aught else—The love which understands,
Surrenders, suffers, and endures when passion's
cold and dead.
And if this wins no solace, no respite
For the one loved, what use has been the fight?
Your question, Grace! It all depends, my child,
On the reaction of the man you've loved—
the thing you've made.
Depend upon it you've created something which
will aid.
—A spark! A seedling!—Pass, my daughter,
unafraid.

* * * * * *

"Claire, you are trembling. Rash, wayward, wild,
You've grasped as well as given,
Perchance, not striven
Too hard to conquer appetite.
Dust dancing in the sunbeam, Claire!
You recollect my simile. Well, well! Our air
Cannot be all pure ether. You're all right!

* * * * * *

"Oh, Yes! We know the women ministered for
their own delight,
Each in her separate way.
There's much to say
On your side, Richard. It's a fearful coil
This old sex problem. Brain and brain;
Body and body; that flashing keen insight

Into a world of art and beauty which is all the soul
You humans are endowed with. Wit, laughter,
share of toil—
How these unite!
Give sense of rounded whole!
Pulses beat higher, comradeship ensues,
A splendid gain,
But clean outside that marriage contract. I will use
A simple illustration—then have done.
If something has been lost it often happens
something has been won.

* * * * * *

"Here is a type. Rigid, affectionate, honest, clean,
upright,
He passes to the home where that embrace
Which Law has sanctified,
Shall still the throb of Nature on this day of spring.
A familiar face,
Lips which have never lied,
Quiescent, acquiescent, dutiful—the wife.
And then the sting—
We'll skip the details; how it came about;
The chance acquaintance; skirt uplifted, eyes that
brimmed,
Then flushed with the soft dew of passion—
Aye the sting,
The bruise—dear bruise—the hurt—sweet hurt—
the bite
Of vivid, vital, pulsing, energizing Life,
By poets hymned.
There's something lost. Inevitable deceit,
A hidden background. (*That has been left out*
In your case, Richard.) If in that retreat

From rectitude and boredom there has sprung
Real tenderness, real pity, longing for solace,
that heartache
Which makes men generous, something has been
gained.
Forces which mar are forces which can make.
Fire can cleanse that which the smoke of fire has
stained.
All must be reckoned. When the urge was spent,
The soft arms flung
Beneath those flowing tresses, wrapt in sleep
She lay. The glimmer of a tear
Upon her cheek. Men prey and women weep!
Into her shell like ear
He murmured 'Oh! My dear! My dear!
The pity of it!' *We count that.*

* * * * * *

"Have we arrived now, Richard? Do you sense
The final judgment?—What I am driving at?
We leave it in the very last event
—You'll suffer, Richard!—to your Conscience."

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